

Research and Higher Education policies for transforming societies: Perspectives from the Anglophone Caribbean

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RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFORMING SOCIETIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN

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INTRODUCTION

Honourable Hazel Manning Minister of Education, Honourable Mustapha Abdul-Hamid Minister of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education, Mr Kwame Boafo Director of UNESCO, Caribbean, Professor Hebe Vessuri and Distinguish Colleagues all, the organisers of this Conference have afforded me the signal honour and privilege of delivering the opening address at this august Conference at which all participants are stars in their own constellation. As one who has recently retired after 34 years in the Higher Education, Research and Policy arenas this is certainly one the last occasions where one can still speak while being mildly relevant. However, I must confess that there is a freedom that comes from having no institutional connections this is becoming a source of enjoyment.

My letter of Invitation stated that this is the second time around for the discussion of this Theme, the first being in Brazil in September 2004. It further stated that hosting the Conference in the Trinidad and Tobago was to ensure increased participation by representatives from the Anglophone Caribbean. Therefore, with only slight apology I have adjusted the title of this address to ‘Research and Higher Education Policies for Transforming Societies: Perspectives from the Anglophone Caribbean’, being assured that the Latin American perspective would have been fully aired in the first Conference. The Anglophone Caribbean is often invisible in reports and conclaves under the rubric of Latin America and the Caribbean; hence there is justification in invoking the concept of ‘home advantage’ in making this adjustment.

Alfred North Whitehead, that great philosopher of both science and education, in his book *Conceptual Activity*, declared that if you wanted to know where any system of

electrons would be in the future you needed to know two things about that system. First, you needed to know the previous history of that system of elections and second, the dynamics forces that were operative on the system at the current time. From these two vectors it is possible to plot its future course. This general principle seems to have validly not only for the movement of sub-atomic particles but also for plotting the future of social systems. If we are to follow Whitehead's dictum then the task of this address, and the Conference, is to:

1. Take careful note of the historical development of higher education and research in the Anglophone Caribbean.
2. Identify the dynamic forces demanding transformation in contemporary Anglophone Caribbean societies.
3. Identify the mix of policies that should guide higher education and research if they are to contribute constructively to the transformation of these societies.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN WITH CONTRASTS TO THE HEMISPHERE

The first university to be established in Americas was the University of Santo Domingo in 1538 when the Vatican issued the charter to train priests from Spain to engage in the evangelisation of the Americas. By the end of the 18th century seven other universities has been established in Latin America. Between 1821 and 1833 ten additional universities were established.

The North American and Caribbean colonies of Britain were started around the same time in the second and third decades of the seventeenth century. In the North American colonies nine universities were founded before the declaration of American independence in 1776. However, up to the end of the eighteenth century not a single college had been established in the West Indian Colonies.

It was not until 1830, nearly three hundred years after the founding of the University of Santo Domingo and nearly two hundred years after the founding of Harvard, when the first college, Codrington in Barbados, was established in the Anglophone Caribbean. Its mission was to train Anglican priests. Between 1830 when Codrington College was established, and 1948 when the University of the West Indies was founded, there were ten small colleges training teachers, five even smaller colleges training ministers of religion, a few schools of nursing and two colleges training agriculturalists. This very meagre provision constituted the entire tertiary level capacity in the sub-region.

(Heuman 1981) explained the lethargy in building an indigenous capacity for higher education in Jamaica, and the very modest capacity that was built, on the grounds that by restricting its size and structure, the colonial administrators justified the recruitment of British officials, technocrats and professionals into the region. Put another way, it created a dependence on overseas recruitment of top managers, technocrats and professionals and consigned to those born and brought up in the colonies the lesser positions in the society. In addition, the recruitment of Europeans was seen by the local planter and administrative elite as one means of bolstering the declining numbers of Whites in the colonies.

It was adult suffrage, representative government and political independence in the second half of the twentieth century that provided both the impetus and need for expansion and diversification of higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean. The first response was the establishment in 1948 of the University of the West Indies as a teaching and research institution, through regional cooperation. The thinking at that time was that no country could afford to establish a university on its own. Hence regional cooperation was used as the means of establishing a University while national governments expanded or established single or multi-disciplinary colleges to address the functional needs of the countries for teachers, technicians, agriculturalists, nurses, medical technicians, and various business related occupations. Until 1995 the only country that departed from this general pattern in Anglophone Caribbean was Guyana, which established the University of Guyana in 1963.

While Governments were following a policy of financing a single regional university and a variety of national colleges funded from the public purse, a new dimension was added to the Caribbean landscape when the Parliament of Grenada in July 1976 passed the act allowing for the St George's University School of Medicine which opened its doors in January 1977. Through a similar arrangement the Ross University School of Medicine began operating in Dominica in 1979. Since then other such institutions, labelled 'off-shore' universities have been established in Belize, St Kitts and Nevis and other countries across the region. The main features of these universities are that they:

- Are physically located in the Anglophone Caribbean.
- Derive their status as universities from Acts of the Parliament of the country in which they are located.
- Are privately owned and funded and are intended to provide profit to their owners.
- Draw the vast majority of the students and staff from outside the Caribbean.
- Are engaged mainly in instruction and only marginally in research.

Given the fact that these institutions are physically located in the Caribbean and derive the university status from Acts of Caribbean Parliaments make them 'on-shore' institutions. Ownership, staff and students are essentially 'off-shore'. With the establishment of the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine which will accredit these institutions, a strong case can be made that these 'off-shore' institutions are now definitely 'on-shore' and a very much a part of the landscape of higher education institutions in the Anglophone Caribbean.

Within the last twenty years another group of universities have started to operate in the Anglophone Caribbean and there was be no question that they are 'off-shore'. The defining features of these institutions are as follows. They

- Are universities that are established outside the Caribbean
- Operate store-fronts in the sub-region or use existing tertiary institutions as sites of their operation.

- Offer programmes to Caribbean students on a fee-paying basis in the countries in which they operate.
- Are subject to very little regulation.

One recent visitor to the Caribbean, commenting on this sub-sector, said that its operations are not far removed from the days of the pirates and the buccaneers.

Over the last decade and a half the Anglophone Caribbean has seen the establishment of several national Universities, two faith-based universities, and several public and private University Colleges. These include the University of Technology, Jamaica, 1995, Northern Caribbean University 1999, the University of Belize, 2000, the University of Trinidad and Tobago 2004, University of the Southern Caribbean University 2006, the College of the Bahamas, University College of the Caribbean and the Mico University College.

The history of higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean has left the sub-region with a mixed bag of legacies. Briefly these legacies can be listed as follows:

1. Apart from the University of the West Indies and the University of Guyana, all other universities serving Caribbean populations are less than 15 years old. Further, a significant number of the other tertiary institutions are small single-discipline institutions with enrolments of less than 1000 students each.
2. The Anglophone Caribbean lags behind the rest of the world with respect to its indigenous capacity to provide its population with higher education. Measures to significantly expand higher education capacity within the sub-region are just over a decade in their implementation. In 1995 the Heads of Government agreed to reach a target of 15 percent of the 18-24 years age cohort with tertiary education, which has not been achieved and itself is well below world norms.
3. The higher education capacity while being limited in quantum, has consistently offered good quality education such that its graduates are internationally competitive.

4. Inability to satisfy the strong demand for higher education within the sub-region. Thirteen of the eighteen countries of the sub-region provide their populations with universal primary and secondary education, while the other five countries offer universal primary education plus upwards of 70 per cent of the school age population with five years of secondary schooling. Accordingly, the Anglophone Caribbean is a fertile recruiting ground for higher education institutions in North America.
5. Long external relationship between high schooling in the sub-region and international matriculation standards, has enabled large numbers of Caribbean nationals to access higher education abroad. This is by no means new. (Brathwaite 1971) in his study of colonial Creole society in Jamaica showed that between 1770 and 1820, 229 Jamaicans went to Oxford and Cambridge. The Jamaican practice mirrored a common pattern throughout the West Indian colonies.
6. Regional cooperation in higher education as manifested by having one of only two regional universities in the world.
7. Heavy reliance on public institutions to provide higher education and relatively weak private sector.
8. Uneven regulatory mechanisms in different countries that only marginally relate to each other thus resulting in weak sub-regional regulation of higher education.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH CAPACITY IN THE SUB-REGION

The genesis of research activity in the Anglophone Caribbean can be traced to the establishment of the St Vincent Botanical Gardens in 1765 and the Bath Botanical Gardens in Jamaica in 1779. The mandate to the curators of these gardens to collect, classify and describe native plants and find out their medicinal and other values. Several such botanical gardens were established in other Caribbean colonies, essentially as one-botanist operations.

The next step in the development of research capacity was the establishment of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad and the Farm School in Jamaica in

the first two decades of the 20th century. The staffs of these institutions carried out research into a variety of issues related to agriculture.

However, the establishment of a higher education institution mandated to carry out research over a wide variety of areas dates to the establishment of the University College of the West Indies in 1948 and then the University of the West Indies in 1963. Indeed, the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture was incorporated into the University of the West Indies as the Faculty of Agriculture.

While the University of the West Indies over its nearly 60 years of existence has developed for itself a reasonably good reputation as a research university, the bulk of that research consists of students projects, thesis, and dissertations and research and publications of staff produced to meet the University's criteria for appointment and promotion. Research conducted by teams of researchers commissioned by public or private entities constitutes a small proportion of the research conducted by the University each year.

The critical observation is that the Anglophone Caribbean has long depended on knowledge generated in metropolitan centres of the Anglophone world that is adopted and adapted to Caribbean circumstances. The generation of knowledge for its own purposes and consumption is relatively recent and the capacity carry out this research is located largely in a single institution, the University of the West Indies.

IMPERATIVES DRIVING CARIBBEAN TRANSFORMATION

Prime Minister of Barbados, the Honourable Owen Arthur, Chairman of CARICOM in his keynote address titled "The Caribbean in the Twenty First Century" delivered at the Conference on the Caribbean in Washington D. C on June 19 to 21, 2007 concisely set out the dynamic forces that are literally demanding the transformation of Caribbean societies, the areas must be transformed and the context in which this transformation is to take place. Let me therefore precise Prime Minister Arthur's presentation.

Prime Minister Arthur listed seven areas in which Caribbean societies needed to be transformed. These were:

1. Reorient their production systems away from dependence on trade preferences to areas of specialisation where there is growing international demand and where our human and institutional capacities allow us to tap into such demand
2. Reorient their fiscal system to reduce dependence on taxes on trade in an age in which trade liberalisation will undermine import duties as a source of revenue.
3. Build enterprises to world standards from the outset and cause them to look to competition rather than protection as the basis of viability.
4. Reorient the State so that it becomes more entrepreneurial looking to public/private partnerships to ensure that priority economic and social development take place without worsening the debt profiles of the countries. In so doing it must bring societies fully into the information age; expand investment in education and training; increase investment in health and environment protection; and apply a global focus on the way it conceives its human resource development strategies.
5. Engage in development strategies deliberately designed to raise the ratio of both exports and private capital flows to GDP. Patterns of resource use of land and labour which have enjoyed the sanction of long usage must now be revised in the context of new and contemporary realities.
6. Create and sustain an enterprise culture which facilitates capital formation for the establishment of new enterprises and the expansion of existing ones.
7. Rely on open rather than closed systems at both the economic and social levels to generate new opportunities to bring the marginalised into the mainstream of society.

Prime Minister Arthur was at pains to describe the context in which Caribbean transformation has to take place. He listed the contextual factors as follows:

- The harsh and confining international environment.
- The relatively short time in which these adjustments must be made.
- The HIV/AIDS scourge
- Rising crime and violence in several societies.
- Global warming and its impact on coastal societies that are highly dependent on tourism
- Decline in multilateral development finance and donor assistance to the sub-region.
- Profound changes in the global economy and the geopolitical consequences.
- The war on terrorism and the new risks to tourism which is so dependent on international travel and the escalating expenditure on security related matters.
- High debt to GDP ratio. Seven of the 10 most indebted countries of the world are located in the Caribbean.

RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES FOR TRANSFORMATION

When the magnitude and scale of the transformation that is required is placed within the context outlined by Prime Minister Arthur then the awesome nature of the challenge posed by the Theme of this Conference is fully revealed. The situation is heightened even further when account is taken of the current status of research and higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean, as previously outlined.

To put it bluntly, in light of the current state of research and higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean, the scope and scale of the societal transformation that is required and the context in which it has to occur it is difficult to see any logical and linear relationship between research and higher education policies and the transformation of Anglophone Caribbean societies. There are too many uncontrollable factors in the context and too many facets to the transformation contemplated to allow any deductive nomological process to render any valid answers. The logic of physics and mathematics does not seem appropriate here. Research and higher education policies are not

conditions prior to societal transformation. Rather it is the pattern logic of biology that may be more appropriate. Research and higher education should be conceived as part of the fabric of transformation that is required. Put another way, transformation of research and higher education in the Caribbean is an integral and inextricably part of the societal transformation that must be take place in constructing the Caribbean society of the future.

The critical question then becomes, what policies are needed to transform research and higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean so that research and higher education can in turn assist in speeding up and enhancing the achievement of the desired transformation? This is the task of the Conference and certainly not of this opening address. Whatever are the specific policies that may be recommended, there are at least five perspectives that each policy must embrace and address if they are to be appropriate to the task. These are process and timeframe considerations, demographic factors, the Anglophone Caribbean as place and people, regional cooperation, and Caribbean integration. Each of these requires some elaboration.

Process and Timeframe Considerations

The perspective of process and timeframe is best established by way of reference to the University of Technology, Jamaica the only technological university in the sub-region. In 1957 the Government of Jamaica established the College of Arts, Science and Technology to produce some of the manpower needs of the developing bauxite, tourism, light-manufacturing industries. The College offered two year-Certificate and three-year Diploma courses in a wide range of technology related areas. In 1995 the institution was upgraded to a technology university but actually received its Charter in 1999. Among the policies adopted by the University was the requirement that all Faculties engage in research and that all full-time staff members conduct research and publish in refereed sources.

The Septennial Review of the University in 2007 identified the major accomplishments of the University in the first decade of its existence as follows:

1. The upgrading of Academic Staff so that 96 per cent now have Degrees at the Masters level or higher.
2. The establishment of the Academic structure of the University replete with Academic Board, Faculties, Schools, Departments, quality assurance mechanisms and the making all of these structures fully operational.
3. The introduction and growth of first degree programmes in all Faculties and the introduction of Masters Degrees and doctoral programmes in some Faculties.
4. The outsourcing by way of franchise of almost all of its Certificate, Diploma and Associate Degree programmes to other tertiary institutions.
5. The expansion of student enrolment to over 8000 students in response to the mandate of the Montego Bay Accord issued by CARICOM Heads of Government to expand tertiary enrolment to at least 15 per cent of the 18-24 years age cohort by 2005.
6. Obtaining accreditation for most of its degree programmes.

The Report highly commended the University for its achievements within the first 10 years of being upgraded to university status. Certainly successful efforts that resulted in substantially improving staff quality, that shifted programmes from Certificate and Diplomas to first degrees, that established quality assurance mechanisms that resulted in the ready acceptance of graduates by employers and the academic community, while at the same time significantly expanding student enrolment represents substantial achievement.

However, the Septennial Report noted that the policy to establish research as a part of the operations of the University was highly ambitious and quite unrealistic because it did not take account of the stage of development of the institution. At the same time that the Staff was being upgraded, mainly to the Master's level, Bachelor degree programmes were being designed, developed and implemented, Certificate and Diploma programmes were being franchised and outsourced, student enrolment was being expanded and there was no real increase in Government subvention, Research was being required as an activity in

which all Faculties and all academic staff should become engaged. Further, there was no adjustment to staff workload, the number of contact hours of academic staff and the facilities were all focused on teaching, with no specific structural adjustment in the terms and condition of service of staff, or the facilities, to accommodate Research.

The UTECH experience is unlikely to be unique among the newly established Universities and University Colleges within the Caribbean. The point being made here is that while Governments and Boards or Councils of Universities can formulate very ambitious policies concerning the development of research capacity for newly established or upgraded institutions, there are essential infrastructure that are required, stages of development that are precursors to succeeding stages in a sequence that needs to take place if the desired outcome are to be achieved. These processes and stages include staff development, the conditions of service that facilitates enquiry and creating pools of qualified students. Account needs to be taken in policy formulation of these processes and timeframe if realism is not to be abandoned. The desired transformations are not trivial. They are substantial. Hence, a long term perspective needs to be applied with appropriate benchmarks that are determined by the stages through which the transformation must of necessary be accomplished. Botched early attempts as a result of poor planning could seriously retard efforts to build research capacity in newly established our newly upgraded universities.

The Demographic Dimension

Almost all Anglophone Caribbean populations have baby-boom generations that are somewhere between 20 to 30 years younger than their American counterpart. There are fewer children entering primary and secondary schools than are leaving them each year. The prime age adult population 20 to 49 years old is now significantly larger that the school age population 5 to 19 years. Most important, the current prime age adult population passed through the school system when the higher education provision was even more inadequate compared to their demands and needs. While many have obtained higher education abroad, the vast majority are still un-served. Indeed, some passed

through the school system when there were serious deficits in the quality of primary and secondary education that must now be rectified.

Higher education in the Anglophone Caribbean, therefore, cannot continue to target recent secondary school leavers. The new target must be the entire population of qualified persons who desire education and training at this level. This is not just for equity reasons but as important, this population constitutes the major component of the labour force upon which Anglophone Caribbean economic competitiveness depends. It is investments in their education and training that is likely to bring the most immediate returns in the transformation process.

The practical implication for higher education is that this at-work population cannot be reached principally by full-time on-campus programmes because of their full-time engagement in the work force. While part-time evening programmes have been a great boon in many institutions, it favours urban residents who are employed in particular occupations and requires transportation systems that operates in the directions that students must go after courses end at night.

All higher education institutions must therefore develop modalities of delivery of their programmes that include full-time face-to-face, part-time face-to-face, vacation packages and on-line delivery and allow students to move easily between these modalities. What is being implied here is that the rigid boundaries between study and work need to be reviewed on two grounds. What is being implied here is that just as students fresh out of school may benefit from some interlude in the world of work during their studies, students who are full-time engaged in the world of work may benefit from some interlude on campus during the course of their studies. Both interludes are conceived as enrichment of the quality of the education offered to either set of students.

The Anglophone Caribbean both a Place and a People

Over the last 150 years education in Anglophone Caribbean has always produced more talent than Caribbean economies have been able to absorb. Accordingly, education in the Anglophone Caribbean has long been integrated into the international labour market. Education has been a principal factor facilitating the migration of Anglophone Caribbean people across the world. This is one of the main reasons why such great emphasis is placed by the mass of the population on examinations that have international currency.

Given this history, investment in higher education in the sub-region cannot be contemplated only in terms of the needs of Anglophone Caribbean economies but also in terms of the needs of the people, wherever they may find economic opportunity. This issue has sparked contending viewpoints. These include:

- The loss of graduates through emigration constitutes brain-drain and serious loss to the sub-region and its development.
- Receiving countries should compensate Caribbean countries for the graduates they receive and especially for those that they actively recruit.
- Remittances from Caribbean emigrants have become a significant element propping up several economies in the region. Probably careful study of the long returns from remittances may show that in the end the sub-region is the net beneficiary of the investments in these emigrants.
- Emigration of educated people from the sub-region has been a safety valve that has contributed to the social and political stability of the sub-region.

In reality the contending views do not represent an either/or situation. Further, Anglophone Caribbean countries cannot close their doors to the emigration of their graduates especially in circumstances where the local and sub-regional economies do not have opportunities in all the areas in which talent is developed. In addition, even in areas in which local opportunities exist, strong international demand pulls from the sub-region persons that are needed locally. What has not happened within the sub-region is that there

has never been any systematic programme that Anglophone Caribbean people who choose to work outside the region could take in order to better prepare them for their choices and also to provide a framework for their continued relationship to the sub-region and to their Caribbean colleagues in the countries of their choice.

What is clearly emerging from the dialogues that have started between the Anglophone Caribbean Diaspora and residents in the sub-region is that in the rapidly globalising world the continued survival of the Anglophone Caribbean as place and people are intricately interrelated. This is not a matter that higher education in the sub-region can ignore.

Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation in higher education is one of the strengths of the Anglophone Caribbean. The cooperation that has sustained the University of the West Indies over the last nearly 60 years has succeeded in building significant social capital within the sub-region. While UWI bashing is now a common practice in many fora the fact is that almost all the national tertiary and faith-based institutions within the region have benefited substantially, directly or indirectly, from the operations of the UWI. Indeed, one of the contemporary issues that must be resolved is how to rationalise the relationship between national universities and the regional university such that that latter continues to contribute to the former to create a symbiotic relationship instead of a competitive relationship that jeopardises the survival of both.

The reality that brought UWI into being has not disappeared with the establishment of national universities. That reality is that no single country can by itself develop and sustain the critical mass of human and financial resources needed to offer high quality higher degree programmes in the range of disciplines and multidisciplinary endeavours that are needed by the society or that which is within the capabilities of its people. While the nationalism of each country, enhanced by insularity, will entertain such a notion the harsh realities of implementation and operation will eventually dispel such a notion.

While regional or functional cooperation in the post-war era and second half of the twentieth century resulted in the establishment and operation of single regional institution, in the twenty-first century the challenge for regional and functional cooperation in higher education is for national institutions to take up the challenge of serving the sub-region. It is mostly likely that initially national institutions concentrate their efforts on their nationals and in the process will unnecessarily duplicate programmes some of which will not be either cost effective or of the desired quality. It is also likely that different institutions will develop centres of excellence in particular areas that will become known and patronised sub-regionally. This is most likely to come to the fore in circumstances in which national institutions begin to confront the challenge of creating knowledge and developing talent in areas related to the felt and urgent needs of their societies. Examples of such areas could well be:

- Hurricane and Climate Science.
- Intelligence, Security and Strategic Sciences.
- Sports Performance
- Forensic Science
- Homoeopathy, Organic and Herbal Sciences
- Work, Production and Labour Market Sciences
- Caribbean Rhythms Industry
- Mining
- Nutraceuticals
- Performing Arts and the global market place

However, regional and functional cooperation in higher education and research will need to be a deliberate strategy that is adopted and implemented by the sub-region. At least three entities will need to be created to ensure regional and functional cooperation in higher education and research. These are:

- a) A coordinating and regulatory mechanism which would perform three basic functions. First, promote exchanges on higher education policies, practices and programmes within the sub-region. Second, advise governments and institutions on higher education policies. Third, be empowered and mandated as the body to grant approval for the establishment and operation of higher education institutions across the sub-region.
- b) A quality assurance mechanism that ensures that high standards in all areas of study in higher education institutions. To date a start has been made with two models, both of which are under the aegis of CARICOM. One model is that of a regional accreditation agency that is an umbrella for national accrediting bodies. The other model is that of a regional accrediting agency with accrediting authorities related specific areas of specialisation, the first such area being medicine. It is my view that is it second model that will prevail because none of the twelve independent countries of the Anglophone Caribbean can by itself establish and maintain a credible national accrediting body capable of ensuring standards for all the disciplines offered in higher education. Most national accrediting bodies are likely to be little more than administrative shells convening ad hoc technical teams that operate on an events basis. Such a modus operandi has little chance of building a community of scholars that accept responsibility to self-regulate standards in their disciplines.
- c) A clearing-house which facilitates nationals of one country undertaking study in another in areas agreed by the Governments, such that Government pay in part or whole the economic cost of their students. This clearing-house would bill Governments for their students studying in other countries, receive such funds and pay over the funds to the institutions in the various countries. In setting up such a mechanism, carefully study make need to be made of the twelve Southern and nineteen Western States of the United States that have successfully operated two such clearing-houses for several years.

Caribbean Integration and CSME

The great issue currently on the agenda of Caribbean integration is the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, CSME. Prime Minister of Barbados in the Thirteen Anniversary Lecture of the Caribbean Community in April 2004 declared that CSME is unquestionably the most complex, most ambitious and most difficult enterprise ever contemplated in the sub-region. He further stated CSME offers the region the prospect of greater self-reliance, internal economic stability and therefore increased capacity to absorb external economic shock and survive. Ann-Margaret Lim of Jamaica says that CSME is a protective hedge against the full force of global market winds.

The candidate countries of the CSME are the twelve independent English-speaking Caribbean countries and Surinam and Haiti. Put another way, these are the fourteen politically independent countries of the Caribbean that are on their own in the world. Political independence freed them from colonial dominated but severed their protection by powerful countries of the world. Further, geographical location, culture and colonial history have excluded them from being part of any powerful or potentially powerful continent bloc of countries. As such these countries are caught in the intersection of the exercise of power in the world. The Anglophone Caribbean, French Creole-speaking Haiti and Dutch-speaking Surinam are now constrained by external imposition to find common cause in constructing their future.

Just in case anyone is in doubt about what is involved let me spell it out in nationalist terms. It is the task of mobilising Antiguan and Barbudans, Bahamians, Belizeans, Barbadians, Dominicans, Grenadians, Guyanese, Haitians, Kittians and Nevisans, Jamaicans, St Lucians, Surinamese, Vincentians and Grenadineans, Trinidadians and Tobagians to share a common Caribbean identity, accept a shared destiny in the world and develop such bonds of solidarity and belonging that supersede their national conception of themselves so that by say 2030 there will be free movement of goods, services, capital and people throughout the region.

Allow me to approach the subject from another direction. In this Western Hemisphere there is North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. North America is a continent, which geographically includes Canada, the United States and Mexico. However, by language, culture and colonial history Mexico is Latin American. The issue related of Mexico's geographical location in North America and historical and cultural location in Latin America is being dramatised daily on American television with respect to Mexicans crossing the border into the United States. Goods, capital, and services can cross the border freely but not people. However, North America and Latin America are defined; the Caribbean is not a part of either.

The Caribbean is an addendum in the Western Hemisphere. The Caribbean is a distinct but small and vulnerable sub-region that is caught in the intersection of the exercise of power within the Hemisphere. We would be grossly mistaken if we believe that we can rely on either North America or Latin America to be concerned about our well being, unless it coincides with some interest of theirs. Further, the Caribbean is inconsequential in the political economy of the rest of the world. It is not clear the extent to which Caribbean people fully comprehend this reality.

The rationale for CSME resides in the logic that adaptive advantage resides in unity among these small vulnerable countries in the Caribbean. Unity has a higher survival coefficient than bilateral exposure to the economic shocks and political threats that are almost certain to come to each of these countries from the countries holding power in the world. However, this unity will only increase the chances of survival it will not eliminate the shocks and threats.

There is a least one thing of which these fourteen politically independent countries of the Caribbean that are not part of Latin America can be sure of for the future. They are going to be beaten, battered and severely bruised by being caught in the middle of power contests and conflicts within the Western Hemisphere and in the wider world. CSME will become a reality not because of the political and other arrangements that have been put in place but rather from grasping the opportunities for increasing the level of Caribbean

integration each time the sub-region is beaten, battered and bruised by the external economic and political shocks that are sure to come.

In this scenario the role of higher education and research should be to:

- Affirm, articulate, refine and expand the vision of Caribbean integration and to create a conceptual framework within which Caribbean people can understand themselves and the world, the relationships that are required to survive and prosper and cultivate the indomitable spirit necessary to overcome the odds.
- Be an avenue and path of upward social mobility through which Caribbean people can access opportunity within the region and in the world at large and an agent that increases the life chances especially of disadvantaged groups within the sub-region.
- Generate, incubate and support innovations, inventions and initiatives and foster and encourage the creative imagination such that the talent and genius of Caribbean people are given full reign to express itself in advancing the Caribbean version of human civilisation.
- Design, develop and deploy indicators and instruments that will allow for the monitoring, evaluation, assessment and critique of the progress, or lack of it, in achieving the integration goals over time.
- Cultivate and foster in every country of the sub-region, across succeeding generations, cadres of champions of Caribbean integration who can be depended upon in every crisis to seize the opportunities presented to advance the processes of integration.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

In the finite time that was available for this address I did not tackle directly the issues of Information and Communication Technologies, Finance and the social and private rates of returns on investments in higher education and research. I have deliberately made

these omissions because I am confident that they will be appropriately and adequately addressed in the Conference.

Allow me therefore one final observation. In many areas the ordinary people of the Caribbean, the folk, have been way ahead of the policies of the intelligentsia and the respected conventions of their times. Looking back we have to salute:

- The descendants of ex-slave who abandoned the plantations to set up their own communities and start to cultivate new crops for exports from which new industries like bananas arose in their times.
- The newly literate men from expanded primary education in the 1880s who ventured to find new opportunities in the building of the railroads in Central America and the Panama Canal and whose remittances created new settlement patterns and re-capitalised the sugar industry at the beginning of the 20th century.
- The inventors of the steel pan who discovered sweet music from discards from the oil industry leading to a new sound and new genres of musicians.
- The calypsonians and reggae artists whose withering social commentaries have resonated across the world while at the same time evoking joyous movements.
- The hucksters who with little formal education conducted successful inter-regional commerce across language barriers long before there was any conception of free regional trade or a single market.

Hopefully the policies of transformation that are envisaged and proposed at this conference will help today's and tomorrow's intelligentsias to catch up with and to keep pace with Caribbean folk.

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